MARVEL
009
SOULE
CAMUNCOLI
ORLANDINI
CURIEL
STAR WARS
DARTH VADER

THE DYING LIGHT

Part III

The fledgling Galactic Empire has only just begun its reign across the galaxy. Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine's Sith apprentice, struggles to come into his own in his new role in charge of the Inquisitors, a group of former Jedi fallen to the dark side.

Formerly a Jedi Knight known as Anakin Skywalker, Vader betrayed the Order and took the lead in their slaughter. Now, the Sith Emperor has given Vader and his new team of Inquisitors the mission of hunting down the Jedi archivist Jocasta Nu.

However, Jocasta is already upon her hunters, as she has broken into the old Jedi temple to retrieve the list of all Force-sensitive children in the galaxy. Her patience is tested, though, when an old pupil is caught dishonoring the archive....

CHARLES SOULE
Writer

GIUSEPPE CAMUNCOLI
Pencils

DANIELE ORLANDINI
Inks

DAVID CURIEL
Colors

GIUSEPPE CAMUNCOLI & FRANCESCO MATTINA
Cover Artists

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
Letterer

HEATHER ANTOS
Assistant Editor

JORDAN D. WHITE
Editor

C.B. CEBULSKI
Executive Editor

AXEL ALONSO
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JOE QUESADA
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DAN BUCKLEY
President

For Lucasfilm:

Senior Editor FRANK PARISI
Creative Director MICHAEL SIGLAIN
Lucasfilm Story Group JAMES WAUGH, LELAND CHEE, MATT MARTIN

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Coruscant.

THE TEMPLE IS SEALED, LORD VADER.
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?
UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY EITHER THE EMPEROR OR ME--NO ONE ENTERS, NO ONE LEAVES.
DON'T WORRY. WE'VE GOT TWO FULL COMPANIES HERE, PLUS A BIG CONTINGENT OF CORUSCANT SECURITY FORCE. THE WHOLE PLACE IS SURROUNDED.
NO ONE'S GETTING PAST US.
SEE THAT THEY DO NOT.
SIR, MAY I ASK WHAT WE'RE EXPECTING TO HAPPEN? I DON'T WANT TO OVERSTEP MY BOUNDS, BUT WE'VE GOT A SIZABLE FORCE HERE.
A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHO WE'RE FACING MIGHT ENABLE ME TO MAKE BETTER TACTICAL DECISIONS.
COMMANDER, WERE YOU INVOLVED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ORDER 66?
YES. I WAS HERE ON CORUSCANT. DID MY PART--ALL THE CLONES DID.
SHUT THOSE JEDI AGITATORS DOWN COLD.
IT SEEMS, COMMANDER...

Jedi Temple Archives.
"...YOU MISSED SOME."
WHO ARE YOU, AND HOW DARE YOU DEFILE THIS SACRED PLACE?
WHY, JOCASTA...
...DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME?

AFTER EVERY TIME YOU DENIED MY REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO THE HIGHER ARCHIVES...
...THE SATISFACTION YOU TOOK IN PREVENTING ME FROM LEARNING THE DEEP SECRETS OF OUR ORDER...
...YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM?
YOU... YOU ARE A JEDI?
I WAS. NOW, I AM AN INQUISITOR.
THE GRAND INQUISITOR, IN FACT.
THEN YOU ARE A TRAITOR. YOU HAVE EVEN LESS RIGHT TO THE KNOWLEDGE IN THESE ARCHIVES THAN I HAD IMAGINED.
PREPARE TO MEET A TRAITOR'S END.
A TRAITOR'S END. YES. I LIKE THAT. BUT PERHAPS YOU HAVE NOT HEARD, MASTER ARCHIVIST.
THESE DAYS...

SZZCK!
...THE JEDI ARE THE TRAITORS.
SITH.
NO. NOT YET. PERHAPS NEVER.
BUT CLOSE ENOUGH.
THERE IS SUCH POWER IN THE DARK SIDE, JOCASTA. SUCH STRENGTH TO BE FOUND IN FURY.
AND I HAVE SO MUCH FURY.
BUT WHY? WHY WOULD YOU BETRAY YOUR ORDER? YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE FORCE?

WHAT BROTHERS AND SISTERS? THE JEDI TOOK ME WHEN I WAS SMALL, AND NEVER SHOWED ME ANYTHING BUT THE LIGHT SIDE OF THE FORCE.
I NEVER FELT AT EASE HERE. NEVER FELT RIGHT.
I ALWAYS FELT THAT SOMETHING WAS BEING DENIED ME.
NOW, AT LAST, THAT VOID HAS BEEN FILLED WITH THE PURITY OF THE DARK SIDE.
BUT BACK THEN, I THOUGHT PERHAPS I COULD FIND WHAT I WAS MISSING IN THESE ARCHIVES-- AND YOU WOULD NOT LET ME LOOK.
THE SECRETS HERE ARE DEEP, COMPLEX, AND STRANGE. THEY ARE NOT FOR EVERYONE.
IF I DENIED YOUR REQUESTS FOR ACCESS, IT IS BECAUSE I DID NOT BELIEVE YOU WERE READY.
GAH!
THAT WAS MY PREROGATIVE AS MASTER ARCHIVIST. I DENIED MANY SUCH REQUESTS. IT WAS MY DUTY! IT REMAINS MY DUTY!
OH NO, JOCASTA--YOU HAVE NO DUTIES. NOT ANY LONGER. THE ORDER YOU SERVED IS DEAD AND GONE.
ALL THIS KNOWLEDGE YOU WERE SO DESPERATE TO HOARD FOR YOURSELF... NOW...
...YOU CAN DO NOTHING TO KEEP IT FROM ME.

I USED TO DREAM OF THIS, YOU KNOW. STRIKING YOU DOWN.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE SO EASY. AFTER ALL, THEY DIDN'T STICK YOU IN THE LIBRARY BECAUSE OF YOUR COMBAT SKILLS.
BEFORE THE PURGE, I COULD NEVER FIND A WAY TO DO IT--THE OTHER JEDI WOULD HAVE STOPPED ME.
THWM!
BUT NOW...
KCK!
...THERE ARE NO OTHER JEDI.

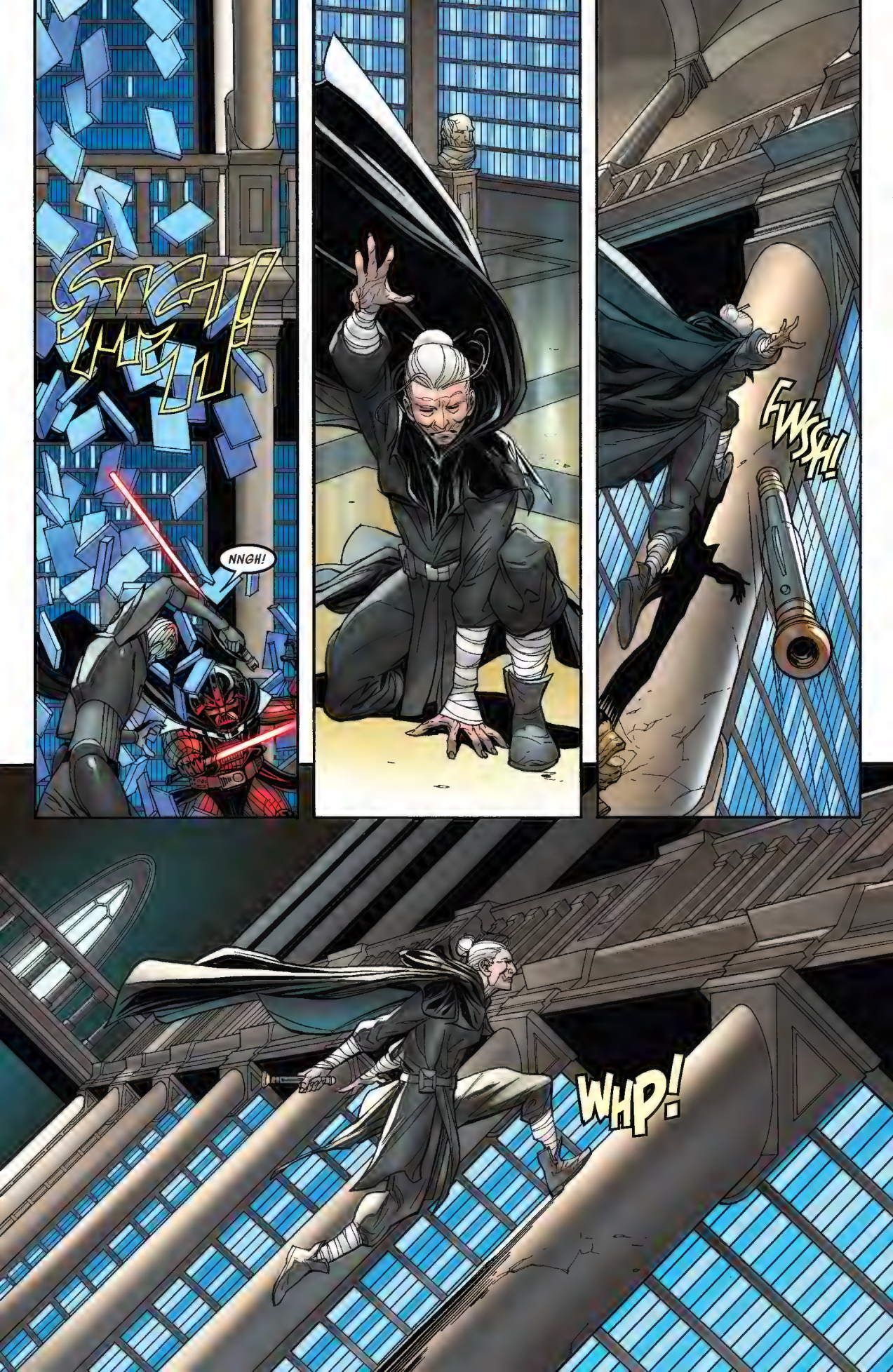
AND THIS FEELS EVEN BETTER THAN I HAD HOPED.
I AM ONE WITH THE FORCE. THE FORCE IS WITH--
SZZCK!
HNH?

NO.
ZZZT
WHY? THIS IS A JEDI! JOCASTA NU!
SHE IS... DEFENSELESS. WHY SHOULDN'T I KILL HER?
BECAUSE I DO NOT WISH IT.

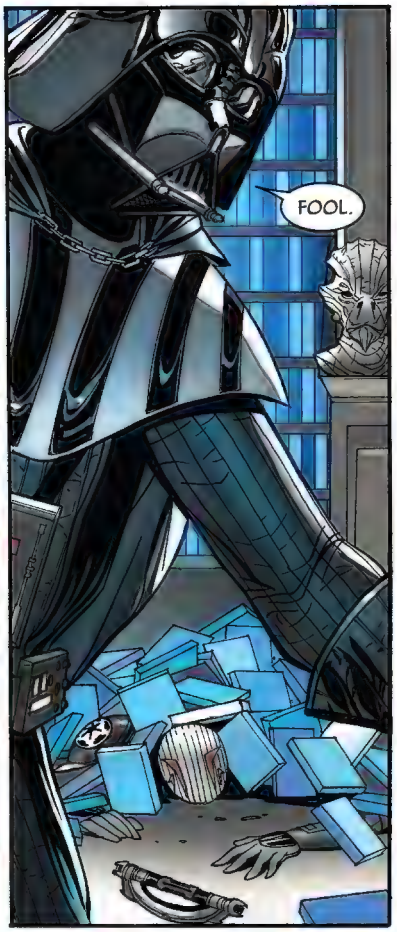
YOU DO NOT WISH IT? WHY WOULD YOU WANT A JEDI TO LIVE?
I WILL NOT SAY IT AGAIN. PUT UP YOUR BLADE.

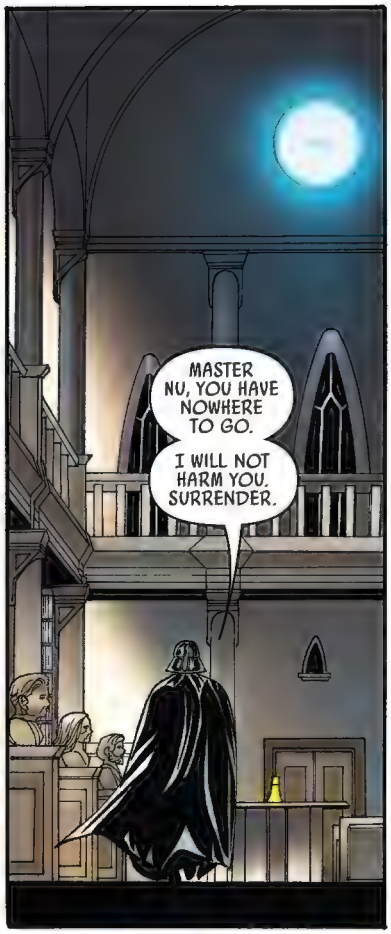
I KNOW WHERE MY LOYALTIES LIE, VADER. BUT YOU...I DO NOT REALLY KNOW AT ALL. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD DEACTIVATE YOUR LIGHTSABER FIRST.
AS A SIGN OF TRUST.

I DO NOT REQUIRE YOUR TRUST, GRAND INQUISITOR. ONLY YOUR OBEDIENCE.


SRSH!
NNGH!
FWSH!
WHP!

GRAH!

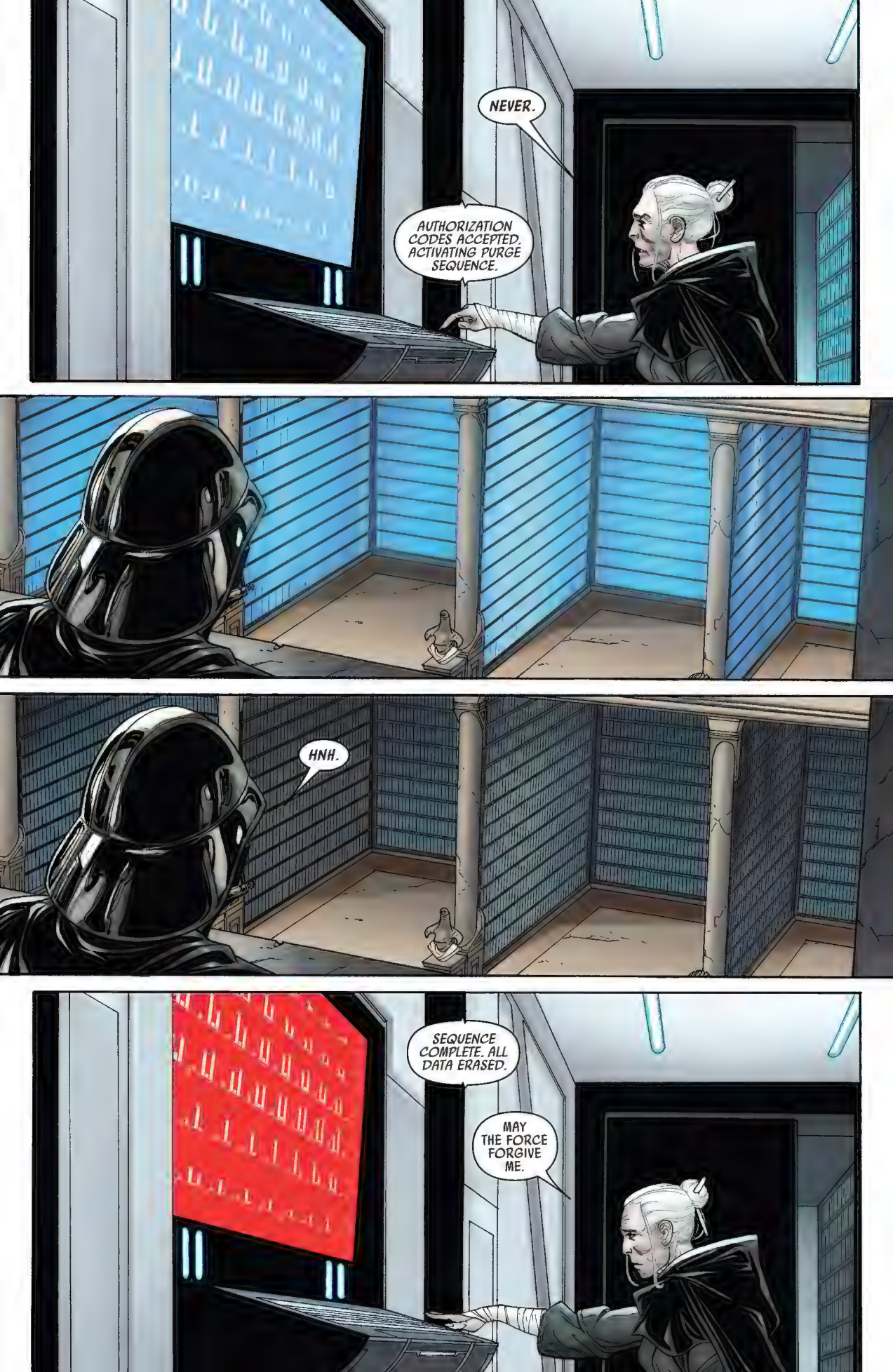

FOOL.

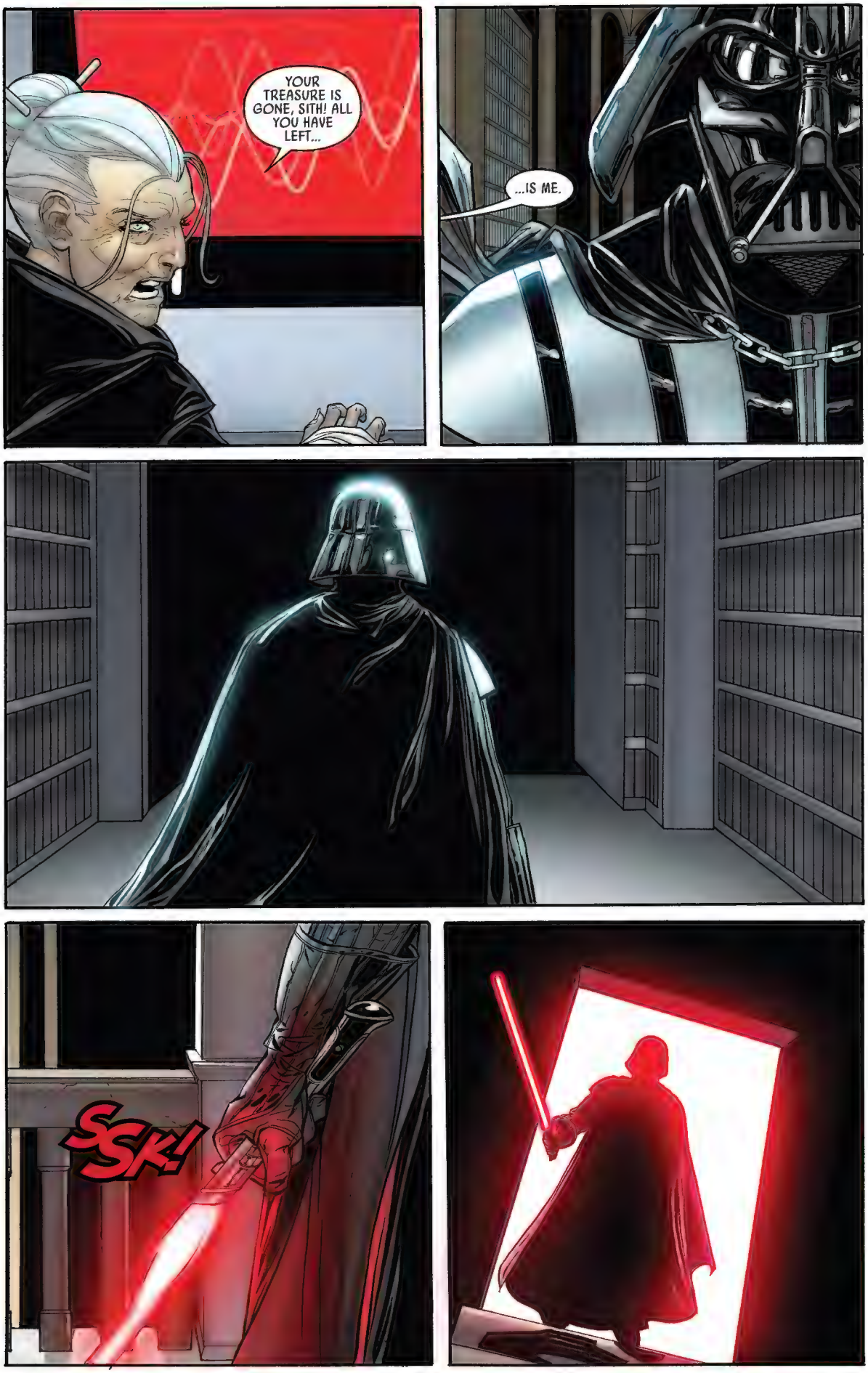

MASTER NU, YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO GO.
I WILL NOT HARM YOU. SURRENDER.

I CAN FEEL THE DARK SIDE POURING OFF YOU. IT BURNS, LIKE MOLTEN METAL DRIPPING ONTO MY VERY SOUL.
IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT? YOU KILLED THIS ORDER-- OR YOU PLAYED A ROLE IN ITS END.
YOU ARE A *TRUE* SITH.

I KNOW WHY YOU WANT ME ALIVE. YOU WANT MY SECRETS, AND THE SECRETS IN THIS ARCHIVE. IT IS TOO VAST TO BE EASILY NAVIGATED WITHOUT ASSISTANCE, AFTER ALL.
NO ONE KNOWS IT BETTER THAN I. WITH MY HELP, YOU COULD PLUNDER EVERY BIT OF ITS KNOWLEDGE.

TO THAT, SITH, I SAY ONE WORD.


NEVER.
AUTHORIZATION CODES ACCEPTED. ACTIVATING PURGE SEQUENCE.
HNH.
SEQUENCE COMPLETE. ALL DATA ERASED.
MAY THE FORCE FORGIVE ME.


YOUR TREASURE IS GONE, SITH! ALL YOU HAVE LEFT...
...IS ME.
SSK!

HELLO. BIOSCANS INDICATE MATCH TO JEDI MASTER...
...ANAKIN SKYWALKER.
MY APOLOGIES, MASTER SKYWALKER, BUT YOUR PRESENCE IN THIS VAULT IS NOT AUTHORIZED.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE ACCESS, PLEASED FOLLOW THE PROPER PROCEDURES TO REQUEST USER PRIVILEGES FROM MASTER JOCAS--

SZZZZZZ

WHP!
MASTER SKYWALKER.
I AM THE GUARDIAN-PROTECTOR OF ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE AREAS OF THE JEDI TEMPLE, PROGRAMMED TO DEFEND AGAINST ANY AND ALL THREATS TO ITS SECURITY.
OF COURSE THAT INCLUDES TECHNIQUES RELATED TO JEDI SABER ATTACKS.
OR PERHAPS... SITH?
IN ANY CASE, A FINE ADDITION TO THIS VAULT'S INVENTORY.
YOU WILL NOT ENTER, MASTER SKYWALKER.
LEAVE NOW, OR--
DIE.

KRCK!
SKYWALKER?
OH MY... THIS IS VERY, VERY BAD.
WHM!
WHERE IS THAT THING?
JOCASTA, YOU'RE AN ARCHIVIST. THIS IS YOUR ELEMENT-- FIND IT, YOU OLD FOOL!
NNF!
KRNCH
AH. AT LAST.
NOW HOW DOES THIS...
AH. THAT'S IT.
KCHK!
K-KLK
KLNK
ZZZZKKK

HNGH!
ZZZSSS!
KRRCK!
ZZZZZZZKKK!
MY TURN.

DARTH VADER
NEXT ISSUE: